

*Memos for  
Pres.*  
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ACTION  
April 3, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Bonn's Negotiations with the East

I have done another status report in the form of a memo to the President (Tab A). Since the last memo there has been another round in both Moscow and Warsaw, plus the Brandt-Stoph meeting. In substance, however, not much has changed. The memo may be worthwhile, however, as a refresher prior to the Brandt visit. CIA has also prepared a lengthy report on the Bahr-Gromyko talks, but without reaching much in the way of conclusions. I have attached it as a Tab.

RECOMMENDATION

That you forward the memo at Tab A to the President.

MORI/CDF C02811543

State Dept., NSC reviews completed

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**SECRET****INFORMATION**

APR 7 1972

**MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT****FROM: Henry A. Kissinger****SUBJECT: Bonn Negotiations with the East**

As background for the Chancellor's visit, I thought you would be interested in a review of the status of West Germany's negotiations with the USSR, Poland and East Germany and the evaluation the Germans have made of these talks. The second phase of the Soviet and Polish talks was concluded in late March, and will probably resume in late April, and Brandt will meet with the East German Premier Stoph on May 21, this time in the West German city of Kassel.

**The Soviet Talks**

The discussion between Egon Bahr and Gromyko ended on March 21 with a short communique stating that both sides would report to their governments to decide how further discussion would continue in the interest of achieving a relaxation of tension on the basis of the status quo in Europe.

In effect, this means that little progress was made on the major issues. The Soviets continue to insist that the West Germans respect all existing frontiers, with specific mention of the Oder-Neisse and East-West German borders. At the same time the Soviets reject any offsetting qualification that reunification of Germany would be the aim of "normalizing" relations.

Bonn has also resisted a Soviet demand for a pledge not to interfere in East German affairs, because this too might be interpreted as an abandonment of the ultimate goal of unification. Similarly, Bonn has opposed Soviet insistence that any treaty between West and East Germany have the status of international law, which would undermine Brandt's philosophical position that East Germany cannot be regarded as a "foreign" state.

In other words the Soviets are still pressing for a comprehensive German acceptance of the territorial and political status quo, which Bonn will not do, at least without some compensation in terms of Soviet acceptance of the Brandt concept of one German nation.

**SECRET**

SECRET

-2-

Initially the Germans were somewhat optimistic; they were impressed with some of the superficial aspects of the talks -- that Gromyko himself has participated in almost all the sessions, and that Kosygin also listened intently to Bahr presentations. In addition, the Germans claim to have reports that the Soviet Politburo devoted a lengthy session to the German question. Bahr claims that his interventions with Gromyko also resulted in pressure on the East Germans to agree to the Erfurt meeting between Brandt and Stoph. Basically, of course, the Germans have been encouraged by their own estimate that Soviet problems with China will eventually produce significant pressure for a stabilization of relations in Europe.

More recently the Germans have taken a more sober view. The Soviet position has softened very little since the opening sessions. The demands are much the same -- except for Soviet willingness to drop its proposals for a recognition of West Berlin's borders (probably because the Berlin issue has now shifted to the talks with the three Western powers). In terms of pressure, it would appear that the Germans are coming under more immediate political pressure to demonstrate some success than the Soviets who seem in no special hurry to reach agreement.

In his letter to you the Chancellor noted some narrowing of differences, but indicated that the two sides remained apart on many points. Other reports we have received of Brandt's attitude suggest that he is not overly optimistic, but determined to pursue the issues further. The latest German foreign office assessment was equivocal; the chances for serious negotiations were rated about even.

One factor is the West German hope that their task might be significantly eased if NATO were more forthcoming on a European Security conference. Accordingly, Bonn hopes to press for a "positive" signal to the Soviets, and use this to convince Gromyko that the success of the Moscow talks will improve the chances for a multilateral conference on European security.

Though we have been briefed on all the exchanges, the Germans have been negotiating on three non-papers handed to the Soviets but never mentioned to us in any way. These papers include the preamble and text of a renunciation of force agreement, and an understanding on Soviet-German relations.

(At Tab A is a CIA analysis of the Moscow talks.)

SECRET

SECRET

-3-

The Warsaw Talks

The second round did not indicate any further movement, even though there has been an exchange of draft agreements. The Poles are sticking hard on their demand for an unqualified recognition of the Oder-Neisse border. And the Germans are still hoping to persuade them that respect for this boundary is all that can reasonably be achieved because of the reservations on a final settlement imposed by the Potsdam agreements.

The talks will resume on April 22. The Germans still feel there is room for maneuver and negotiation, and that a compromise formula can be found. They hope to negotiate a package in which a compromise on the border would be accompanied by progressive normalization of relations, i. e., extended cultural, trade and economic arrangements. The Germans are counting on Polish interest in large German economic credits to tilt the negotiations in their favor.

The Poles have told us that they do not regard the talks as at an impasse, and have some hopes that an acceptable formula can be found on the border question. They have shown considerable interest in gaining our support for an unconditional recognition of the Oder-Neisse.

The Brandt-Stoph Meeting

As the Chancellor has already indicated to you in his letter, he was impressed with the popular reaction to his presence in East Germany, but on the substance of the talks little was achieved. The East German Premier was adamant on the need for immediate recognition of his government, as well as its admission to all international organizations. He set forth a long list of immediate demands, including UN membership and recognition of West Berlin as an independent political entity. Brandt carefully spelled out his concept of a special relationship between the two Germans but without success. While Bonn had hoped that some working groups might be established to deal with bilateral subjects such as cultural exchanges, Stoph objected, and proposed that basic issues be settled first. Thus, the second meeting will not benefit from any interim contacts at a lower level.

Brandt believes he made it clear, however, that three areas of discussion are vital: discussion of relations between the two states, discussion of communications, and discussion of means to alleviate the obstacles to human contacts. In his letter to you he described the results as meagre, but did not exclude that a few openings could be developed.

SECRET

SECRET

-4-

The Outlook

In his report to his party leadership the Chancellor indicated that the three sets of talks were interdependent. While he said Bonn's basic position was grounded in its commitment to the Western Alliance and European institutions, the West Germans needed to convince their Allies, especially the United States, of the need for an East-West settlement. Only through a new relationship between Bonn and Eastern Europe and the USSR could the West Germans hope to contain the influence of the East German regime. Though they do not state it openly, the West Germans apparently have concluded that by accepting the status quo in most important respects, and thereby conciliating the Soviet Union, they can then proceed to work on some rapprochement with the East Germans in which the natural assets of West Germany's superior position would finally prevail.

Brandt obviously considers his Washington visit a key factor in preparing for the next phase of Eastern negotiations. He wants a clear endorsement of his approach, not only to strengthen his negotiating position but also to counter the increasingly sharp criticism that is developing from the Christian Democratic Party. In taking aim on Brandt's conduct of Eastern policy, the CDU also has recently tried to enlist our support to halt what one CDU leader described as a total capitulation. In short, there is some danger that we are becoming the object of an internal West German political battle. This suggests that any endorsement we give Brandt should be no more than general support for the improvement of the FRG's relations with the East -- without approving specific FRG moves.

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